

Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D C 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

29 May 1984

Poland-USSR: Increasing Friction?Summary

We believe that there is increased concern in Moscow about Poland. Although the Soviets endorsed party leader Jaruzelski during his visit to Moscow in early May, [redacted]

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[redacted] they are increasingly unhappy at the slow pace of normalization and are increasingly pushing for policies more to their liking. [redacted]

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Moscow probably is not seeking to enforce new orthodoxy on the Poles-[redacted]-but may be trying to prevent Warsaw from going ahead with new unconventional policies. We believe Soviet ire may be focused particularly on Jaruzelski's efforts to seek accommodation with the Church. Increasing Soviet interference in Polish policymaking is likely to reinforce the immobility that has seized the regime and deepen the stalemate between the authorities and society. In coming years we expect Polish-Soviet frictions to increase because of Soviet frustration over the failure of the Poles to resolve their problems and because of economic demands each will place on the other. [redacted]

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] East European Division, Office of European Analysis. It was coordinated with the Office of Soviet Analysis. It was requested by Richard E. Combs, Director, Office of Eastern European and Yugoslavia Affairs, Department of State. Comments and questions are welcome and should be addressed to [redacted] Chief, East Europe Division, EURA, [redacted]

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The conventional wisdom both within and outside the intelligence community asserts that Moscow is willing to support a military man as the head of the Polish party and to tolerate some of his relatively moderate policies so long as he is able to maintain order and stability. In recent months, however, [redacted] the Soviets are increasingly unhappy at the slow pace of normalization and are pushing for adoption of more policies to their liking. This memorandum will analyze that evidence and discuss the implications. [redacted]

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Background

Since the end of World War II Moscow has been plagued with the Poles' search for unique solutions to their problems. Gomulka's pronouncement of "separate roads to socialism," his dissolution of collective farms and toleration of a larger Church role, Gierek's hasty and dramatic expansion of economic ties with the West in the 1970s, and his capitulation to workers' demands for an independent trade union in 1980--all presented the Soviets with serious ideological as well as practical problems. While paying lip service to Soviet concerns, the Poles generally managed to convince Moscow that the preservation of domestic peace required deviant policies. [redacted]

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The rise of Jaruzelski to top political positions presented Moscow with another unique Polish solution. Trained in the Soviet Union, he was well known to the Soviets and apparently respected as the leader of a well-trained and important component of the Warsaw Pact. Despite his membership in the Politburo since 1968, the Soviets apparently did not hold him accountable for the problems created by Poland's political leadership and probably greeted his selection as prime minister in February 1981 as bringing some much needed backbone into the hapless government. His subsequent lackluster performance and unwillingness during much of 1981 to use tougher measures against Solidarity, however, must have created doubts in Moscow's mind. He probably redeemed himself to some extent by his successful imposition of martial law and subsequent outlawing of Solidarity. As security concerns recede, however, Moscow may again be sliding into ambivalence about Jaruzelski and the direction he is giving Polish policies. [redacted]

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Mixed Signals

Moscow's recent public reporting and commentary on Polish events have been cautiously supportive of Jaruzelski and his policies. In March, for example, the Soviets published--although a bit tardily--extensive excerpts from Jaruzelski's speech to the PZPR's National Conference of Delegates. The positive coverage of Jaruzelski's 4-5 May trip to the Soviet Union also suggested

that Jaruzelski is in their good graces. There were some hints arising out of that visit, however, that the Soviets are still bothered by Poland's numerous problems, including the party's political weakness and the strong role of the Church. In addition, while the official communique reported a "unanimity" of views on international questions, it cited only "complete mutual understanding" on bilateral issues, indicating some differences. The most noteworthy exception to the positive press coverage in recent months was a scathing critique of Jerzy Wiatr and other party liberals that appeared in Voprosy Filosofii last December. This piece pointedly reminded the Poles of Soviet unhappiness over disarray in the PZPR and possibly was an indirect criticism of Jaruzelski's relative inattention to party affairs. [redacted]

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[redacted]
[redacted] we do not believe that the Soviets would stand in the way of Poland's expanding its trade ties with the West so long as Jaruzelski does not repeat Gierek's hapless policies or make too many political concessions. Such ties are likely to be seen as relieving some of the pressure for Soviet economic help. [redacted]

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Over the years Moscow has come to live with such Polish idiosyncrasies as a strong private sector and an influential Church. We doubt that the new Soviet leadership is ready to deal with the political and economic turmoil that would come from the pursuit of a dramatically tougher domestic line by Polish authorities. [redacted]

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On the other hand, we find certain aspects [redacted] very believable. Soviet concerns about the role of the Catholic Church, the continued existence of a large private agricultural sector, and Warsaw's "coddling" of non-cooperative intellectuals are longstanding. We also find it credible that the new Soviet leadership, in assessing its relationship with Poland, would seek to repeat Moscow's fundamental positions on these subjects. In addition, it seems likely that Moscow might seek to tie what it considers "better performance" on these issues to some economic benefits. [redacted]

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Net Assessment

On balance, we believe the [redacted] [redacted] increased concern in Moscow that has led to an expanded list of Soviet complaints and greater pressure on certain issues. This concern most likely reflects Soviet frustration over the Poles' scant progress in resolving political and economic problems and lingering suspicion of some of Jaruzelski's moderately innovative policies. [redacted]

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*We agree with the assessments of our embassies in Moscow and Warsaw that the implications of the long-term economic agreement signed during Jaruzelski's visit to Moscow are not clear. Since the agreement apparently did not commit either side to specific new projects, it probably was relatively non-controversial. Jaruzelski has repeatedly claimed, however, that his long term goal is to reorient Poland's economy toward the East. [redacted]

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The Issues

We believe that Moscow, rather than trying to enforce orthodoxy at last on the Poles, probably is seeking to head-off new non-conformist policies. Warsaw probably has raised Soviet hackles by negotiating with the Church on a law legalizing its status, on a plan to allow the Church to aid private agriculture, and on the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Each of these proposals, if implemented, would be another precedent for Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe. We believe Soviet pressure is likely to have played a role in slowing progress on these issues early this year. [REDACTED]

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Jaruzelski may be willing to accede to Soviet concerns on these issues. We note that the Poles apparently came away from the Jaruzelski-Chernenko talks with some economic assistance, which probably was not granted without agreement on some sensitive political issues. [REDACTED]

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Implications

Increasing Soviet interference in Polish policy making is likely to reinforce the immobility that has seized the regime and

* [REDACTED] it is difficult to tell whether the regime's behavior was due solely to Soviet pressure, to Polish caution on new policies in the wake of a changeover in the Soviet leadership, or to the fact that Jaruzelski must deal with domestic hardliners who also oppose greater accommodation with the Church. [REDACTED]

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deepen the stalemate between the authorities and society. Soviet actions are likely to narrow further the range of policy options that Jaruzelski would consider acceptable. In addition, Soviet misgivings will help foster resistance to Jaruzelski's moderate policies, especially by encouraging hardliners to undertake unilateral actions that cannot be disavowed easily by Jaruzelski. The recent "crucifix war," for example, may have been an attempt by domestic hardliners to sour relations with the Church. [redacted]

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In the coming years we believe the level of bilateral frictions will increase. Moscow is likely to become even more frustrated at what we expect to be a continuing failure of the Poles to get their economy going or to restore the party's ability to rule effectively. Continued Polish requests for economic assistance are likely to burden the relationship, especially since Moscow is not likely to be sufficiently responsive. The Poles are likely to continue parrying policy suggestions they consider politically dangerous, but Warsaw will be at an increasing disadvantage to the extent that relations with the West remain restricted. At some point Moscow could overcome its concerns about "rocking the boat" and support someone who it believes could better resolve Poland's problems. [redacted]

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What If We Are Wrong?

If Moscow has recently come to the conclusion that something must be done soon about Poland and Jaruzelski resists its "advice," we would expect more public criticism similar to what we saw in 1980 and 1981 after the creation of Solidarity. This would include much more critical press coverage out of Moscow and from elsewhere in East Europe. The result in Poland would likely be an increase of factional activity as the hardline elements tried to take advantage of the opportunity to oust Jaruzelski. This bickering would also generate increased oppositional activity from underground leaders tempted to take advantage of regime weaknesses. At the same time, the security services, deeply involved in such infighting, probably would become more aggressive against the opposition. The result would be increased tension in Poland. [redacted]

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If Moscow has offered--and Jaruzelski accepted--a far-reaching deal, then similar results should also be evident in the coming months. The Poles would have extra money to meet Western debt payments or for extra imports, and the regime's policies against opposition forces, the Church, and the private sector would become noticeably more confrontational. This course, if pursued aggressively, would surely result in more strikes and violence. [redacted]

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